

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 MMO-01 SAA-01 OPR-02 PER-01
SS-15 PM-05 NSCE-00 PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAC-00 DODE-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10
EUR-12 IO-13 SSM-03 PPT-01 CA-01 AID-05 EB-08
COME-00 /123 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN LPOPE
APPROVED BY NEA M DRAPER
-----009287 290102Z /64

O 290015Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 191849

INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE, US

SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON

REF: STATE 076978

1. FOR SOME TIME IN RESPONSE TO WHAT HAS BECOME AN IN-
CREASINGLY UNPREDICTABLE SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON,
EMBASSY BEIRUT HAS BEEN QUIETLY ADVANCING PLANNED DEPARTURES
OF AMERICANS, KEEPING VACANT POSITIONS UNFILLED OR UNDER RE-
VIEW AND ENCOURAGING DEPENDENTS TO LEAVE SOMEWHAT EARLIER
THAN PLANNED. ON JULY 27 AMBASSADOR PARKER DECIDED TO SEND
OUT THE REMAINING 12 DEPENDENTS OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN
BEIRUT ALONG WITH FIVE EMBASSY PERSONNEL. THEY WILL BE
LEAVING LEBANON, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, BY REGULAR COMMERCIAL
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FLIGHTS IN THE COMING DAYS. BEIRUT AIRPORT IS FUNCTIONING
NORMALLY.

2. WHEN SUCH STEPS ARE TAKEN, THE EMBASSY OF COURSE NOTI-
FIES THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. THE FOLLOWING NOTICE TO
AMERICAN CITIZENS IN LEBANON WAS THEREFORE POSTED AT THE
EMBASSY'S CONSULAR SECTION ON JULY 27, AND WORD WAS PASSED

ORALLY TO KEY AMERICANS BY TELEPHONE.

BEGIN QUOTE: THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT SUGGESTS THAT

AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO DO NOT HAVE BUSINESS IN LEBANON
SHOULD LEAVE AT THEIR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. EMBASSY
OFFICE HOURS REMAIN 8:00 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M., MONDAY THRU
FRIDAY. END QUOTE

WORD QUICKLY GOT OUT AND THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS PLAYED
THE STORY UP.

3. THE DEPARTMENT LATER THAT DAY TOOK THE FOLLOWING LINE
WITH THE PRESS AND POSTS CAN DRAW ON ALL THIS INFORMATION
IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES:

-- THIS IS NOT AN EMBASSY EVACUATION. IN VIEW OF THE
FIGHTING IN BEIRUT AND THE SECURITY HAZARDS, WE DECIDED
THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO REDUCE OUR EMBASSY STAFF
SLIGHTLY AND TO SEND THE DEPENDENTS OUT, AT LEAST TEMPO-
RARILY.

-- AS IS THE CASE WHENEVER OUR EMBASSIES TAKE STEPS OF
THIS KIND, IT IS THE CUSTOM TO INFORM THE AMERICAN COM-
MUNITY. SUCH ADVISORY COMMENTS AS WERE ISSUED BY OUR
EMBASSY IN BEIRUT TO OUR AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN
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ISSUED ON OTHER OCCASIONS IN LEBANON, PARTICULARLY IN
1975 AND 1976, WHENEVER SECURITY CONDITIONS DICTATED.

-- THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO AN ACCUMULATION
OF FACTORS OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS AND NOT TO ANY SPECIFIC
EVENT. THE EMBASSY IN BEIRUT WILL CONTINUE TO PERFORM ALL
ESSENTIAL BUSINESS.

4. INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN REFTEL REMAIN IN EFFECT.
U.S. CITIZENS SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED FROM TRAVELING TO
LEBANON. VANCE

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